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ABSTRACT

Although individuals preparing for careers in educational administration have recognized the importance of the community for schools and school districts, they have often lacked a complex understanding of "community." This paper describes a community-study research project that was developed and implemented in a graduate educational administration course at Washington State University. The project was designed to acquaint students with various theories of community and to provide them with specific methods for understanding communities. During the 1992, 1993, and 1994 summer sessions, 10 student research teams conducted studies of Pullman, Washington, in which they identified members of the community power structure and their opinions on educational issues. The project involved the following stages: theoretical grounding, research design and data collection, data analysis, and written and oral presentations. To determine the impact of the research project on students, a survey was conducted of the 41 participating graduate students. A total of 15 responses were received, a 37 percent response rate. Students expressed satisfaction with their experience in the educational administration program and in the course, and with their research project experiences. They reported that they gained considerable knowledge from the project. They also reported that they gained more theoretical than practical knowledge and learned more about the community than about the research process. Appendices contain a list of the community studies undertaken by students. (LMI)

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PROSPECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS STUDYING COMMUNITIES: INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT*

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PROSPECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS STUDYING COMMUNITIES: INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction and Problem

Individuals preparing for careers in educational administration typically have a relatively unsophisticated understanding of the concept of *community* although they are well aware that a community forms an important context of schools and school districts (Saxe, 1984). Teachers preparing to be principals have a conception of community that is typically more-or-less limited to some of the parents of the children in their classrooms. For principals preparing to be superintendents, their conception of community is typically that of certain parents and groups of parents within their school's attendance area. Particularly important in these views of communities may be parents who actively support the school through participation in PTA activities and/or membership in boosters clubs and parents who regularly criticize school programs, teachers, staff, and administrators. Beyond these limited conceptions of community, the community context in which schools and districts are imbedded is typically experienced ambiguously yet is often referred to as *"the community"*--implying a relatively homogeneous, amorphous, monolithic, apolitical entity (Wirt & Kirst).

Objectives

In response to the low level of sophistication regarding the concept of community of students preparing to assume various administrative roles in schools, a community study research project was developed and implemented in a graduate educational administration course. The purposes of the project were twofold. The first was to provide students with various relatively sophisticated theoretical conceptions of community.

The second was to provide students with specific methods for understanding and describing communities by guiding them through a theoretically based community study research project of a specific community.

There are two objectives of this paper. The first is to describe in detail the community study research project and how students were guided through their projects. And, the second is to describe the impact of the community study research project on the students in the class. Consistent with the objectives stated above, the paper is divided into two main sections. The first section is concerned with a description of the community study research project experience. And, the second is concerned with a description and analysis of the impact of the community study research project experience on the students.

The Community Study Research Project Experience

The community study research project experience was composed of two related parts. The first was instruction in, reading about, and discussion of four theoretically different ways of conceptualizing and investigating community power structures. These included elite (Hunter, 1963; Kimbrough, 964), pluralistic (Dahl, 1961), socio-economic (Vidich & Bensman, 1968; Warner & Lunt, 1941), and kinship (Clinton, 1979) theories. With the exception of kinship theory, these theories are summarized by Lutz & Iannaccone (1969). And, the second part of the community study research experience was designing, conducting, and reporting community power structure studies or designing, conducting, and reporting surveys of power structure members regarding educational issues.

Parameters Established for the Research Projects

In planning for and developing the specific details of the community study research experience, it was decided to establish a set of parameters which would guide development of the research project experience for the students. Seven parameters were established. These were: (1) The research project experience would be a team rather than an individual effort; (2) each team would conduct its community study from a different theoretical perspective; (3) the experience would be structured in such a way that the students would assume the role of consultants retained by the superintendent of the school district in which the community studies were conducted; (4) technical reports would be prepared for each study and would have a professional rather than an academic character; (5) at the completion of the studies, professional presentations would be made to members of the administrative team and school board members; (6) all studies would be of the same community, Pullman, Washington; and (7) team members would have access to a word processor.

The Community Studies

During the 1992, 1993, and 1994 summer sessions, ten community study research projects were conducted by the graduate students enrolled in the School Organization & Administration course. All of these studies focused on the Pullman, Washington, community and the Pullman School District. Four of these studies were power structure studies; six were power structure survey studies. During each of the summer sessions, the teams each employed a different theoretical framework to guide their studies. The studies involved forty-one graduate students associate with ten research teams. Most of the students were enrolled in the School Organization & Administration course to fulfill a professional certification

requirement and/or to fulfill a course requirement for a masters or doctoral degree in educational administration. All studies were carried out over a three week period during the month of July and were produced as professional technical reports similar to that which a consultant under commission would provide to a superintendent in a school district. Oral reports of the studies were presented at formal meetings involving administrators and school board members.

Specific Purposes of the Community Study Research Projects

During the 1992 summer session four research teams conducted four different community studies. The purpose of these studies was to identify and characterize the political power structure associated with the Pullman School District. Each of these studies employed a different theoretical framework. These included elite, pluralistic, social class, and kinship theories. As noted above, when the studies were completed and reported, it became apparent that, even though the Pullman community at one time had had a powerful kinship structure, at the present time a kinship structure was no longer functioning.

During the 1993 summer session, three research teams conducted three different community studies. The purpose of these studies was to determine opinions regarding various national, state, and local educational issues of members of the power structures identified in the 1992 studies. During the 1994 summer session, three research teams conducted three additional community studies. The purpose of these studies was to ascertain the opinions of members of the power structures identified in the 1992 studies regarding various aspects of the Pullman School District Facilities Committee's proposed facilities master plan.

Other Purposes of the Community Study Research Projects

Threaded through the overall purposes of the community study research projects and the specific purposes of each research project, there were other purposes of the community research projects which should be mentioned. These were concerned with students learning how to conduct social science research in general and educational field research in particular. With respect to research, the following purposes were associated with the community study research projects: (1) To design studies consistent with a theoretical framework; (2) to develop interview guides and questionnaires consistent with a theoretical framework; (3) to collect field data through interviews and self-response questionnaires; (4) to analyze data and propose conclusions consistent with a theoretical framework; (5) to make practical recommendations consistent with a theoretical framework, and (6) to prepare written reports of research projects; and (7) to make oral presentations of the salient aspects of the research projects.

Instruction and Guidance in Conducting the Community Studies

The instruction and guidance given students in the School Organization & Administration course for conducting community study research projects and reporting these projects can be understood in terms of four related phases. The first phase was concerned with gaining knowledge of different theories of community power structures and the research methods associated with each method. The second phase was concerned with designing studies and collecting data. The third phase was concerned with the analysis of data and formulating conclusions and recommendations. The fourth and final phase was concerned with writing and orally presenting professional technical reports.

In the first phase concerned with gaining knowledge of different theoretical perspectives regarding identifying and describing community power structures, there were four steps. The first of these four steps involved presenting and discussing with class members four different theories useful in identifying and studying community power structures. As noted previously, these included elite (Hunter, 1963; Kimbrough, 1964), pluralistic (Dahl, 1961), socio-economic (Vidich & Bensman, 1968; Warner & Lunt, 1941), and kinship (Clinton, 1979) theories. The second step involved directing the students to read summary sources describing these theories. Additionally, students were referred to the primary sources associated with each theory. (As noted above, with the exception of kinship theory, these theories are summarized by Lutz & Iannaccone, 1979.) The third step involved presenting and discussing the research methods associated with each theory. And, the fourth step involved directing students to read summary sources regarding the research methods. (The research methods, with the exception of those associated with kinship theory, are also nicely summarized by Lutz & Iannaccone, 1979.) Additionally, students were referred to primary sources.

With respect to the second phase of instruction and guidance, which was concerned with designing studies and collecting data, there were three steps. The students first self-selected themselves into a research team associated with a particular theoretical framework. During the 1992 summer session, four research teams were formed. As mentioned above, one team based its research on elite theory, another on pluralistic theory, another on socio-economic theory, and the other on kinship theory. During the other summer sessions, only three teams were formed because, as

noted above, kinship theory demonstrated itself not to be useful in studying the Pullman community.

In the second step, each team developed a research methodology, design, and appropriate data collection instruments and procedures consistent with the theoretical framework, specific purposes of the study, and practical considerations, for example time and travel constraints. Various sample interview guides and/or self-response questionnaires were presented to simulate teams creativity in developing appropriate yet practical research methods and questioning strategies. Different from the 1992 and 1993 summer sessions, during the 1994 summer session, representatives of each team met together to develop a standardized self-response questionnaire which would be applicable for each team representing different theoretical frameworks. And as a third step following the development of a research methodology, design, and data collection instruments and procedures, the teams collected field data. During this step, daily reports and discussions of data collection activities and problems provided guidance and support during the data collection phase of the community studies.

Following data collection, a third phase of instruction and guidance involved analyzing data and formulating conclusions and recommendations. In this phase, each team presented its analyses during class sessions which were critiqued by class members as well as by the professor. Through the process of successive presentations and critiques, analyses, conclusions, and recommendations became successively more sophisticated and more closely linked to guiding theories.

The fourth and final phase of the instruction and guidance involved the preparation and finalization of technical reports as well as the

preparation for and delivery of oral the presentations of the community studies. As guidance in the preparation of the final technical reports, a suggested table of contents was provided. In addition to the selection of an appropriate title, the suggested table of contents included: (1) Executive Summary, (2) Introduction and Purpose of the Study, (3) Description of the Community and School District, (4) Theoretical Framework Guiding the Study, (5) Research Methodology, Design, and Procedures, (6) Summary of Data and Analysis, (7) Conclusions and Recommendations, (8) References, and (9) Appendices. It was emphasized that the table of contents was suggestive: Sections could be given different titles; sections could be merged or subdivided; and/or sections could be added or deleted. Furthermore, it was emphasized that the order of section presentation in the report was not necessarily the order in which the report should be written.

As additional guidance, the reports generated in the 1992 community studies were made available to the 1993 and 1994 teams as models of technical reports. As the team reports were being generated, three in-process drafts of each team report were reviewed and critiqued by the professor.

As guidance for the making the oral presentations of the studies to the members of the district administrative team, school board members, and other interested parties, each team was direct to develop and rehearse a twenty minute oral presentation which summarized the purpose or purposes of the study, theory associated with the study, research methods, conclusions of the study, and recommendations implied by the study. A requirement of the presentations was that all members of each team had to be part of each presentation and that appropriate visual displays must

accompany each presentation. Several days prior to the scheduled formal presentations, rehearsals were conducted in settings which resembled the district's board room in terms of seating and projection patterns. On the last day of each of the summer sessions, formal presentations of the community studies were made in the school district's boardroom to members of the administration and the school board, and, in one presentation, members of the district's school facilities committee. Following a formal introduction, each team made a twenty minute presentation. Following the presentations, teams responded to audience questions. (Copies of the presentation programs are contained in Appendices C, D, and E.) At the close of each set of presentations, a member of each team formally presented the superintendent with a copy of the prepared technical report.

It should be noted that although the phases and steps within phases are presented here as clear and distinct, in actuality the borderlines between the phases and steps was blurred in most cases. For example, the line between doing the analyses and reporting the analyses was clearly vague. Written drafts of the analyses were often critiqued by the professor which led to further analyses.

Requirements for Conducting the Community Studies

Instruction and guidance during all aspect were tied to a specific production time line during each of the three-week summer session courses. This is to say, deadlines were set for specific class meetings for the accomplishment of various phases of the studies. Some of these deadlines involved written requirements, while others involved oral presentation requirements.

The 1992, 1993, and 1994 summer session sections of School Organization and Administration met daily, Monday through Friday, for three hours each day for three weeks. For purposes of discussion, the class meeting days in this paper will be sequentially numbered from 1 through 15. Each summer an extra 16th class meeting was held for three hours in the evening prior to the last (15th) session.

Written Requirements

The production of the written technical reports had a recursive character. This is to say, guided by the suggested table of contents, various sections of the report were submitted for review and critique, returned to the teams for revisions and section additions, then resubmitted for review and critique. This recursive process was continued throughout five submissions over the fifteen class meetings.

The first submission required the title, and the sections concerned purpose, research design, methodology, and procedures including a draft of an interview guide and/or questionnaire. This was due on the 4th class meeting. The second submission required the title and sections concerned with purpose, description of the community and district, theoretical framework, research methodology, design, procedures, interview guides and/or instruments, and summary of data. This submission was due on the 9th class meeting. The third submission required a complete draft of the report with the exception of the executive summary. This was due on the 11th class meeting. The fourth submission required a complete draft of the report including the executive summary, references, and appendices. This was due on the 13th class meeting. The fifth and final submission required a copy of the technical report which was to be forwarded to the

superintendent. The report had to be professionally printed and bound. This final report was due during the last class meeting.

Oral Requirements

Oral requirements took two forms. One form involved the daily team reports of progress, and the other the formal oral presentations of the studies and the preparations for these presentations. During class meetings 1 though 13, teams were required to give five minute progress reports discussing problems encountered and insights gained. Following these presentations the professor responded to student questions. In preparation for the formal presentation to administrators and board members, a required rehearsal was conducted during the 16th class meeting. During the rehearsal, presentations were not interrupted and were timed. After the allotted twenty minutes per team presentation, the presentation was cut off without comment and the next presentation begun. Class members not presenting served a silent critical audience. Following the presentations, the professor critiqued the style of the presentations. On the 15th and last class meeting, formal presentations were required to be made in the district's boardroom to administrators, board members, and occasionally others. Polished professional presentations were expected to be supported by appropriate visual displays. Professional attire was mandatory. The presentations were guided by a printed program rather than by a clock. The contents of the studies, the audience, and the physical surroundings all conveyed an expectancy of and requirement for a high level of professional, oral, and personal performance.

Assessment of the Impact of the Community Study Research Experience

Purposes

In order to assess the impact of the community study research project experience on the students, a limited study was conducted. There were three purposes of the study. The first was to assess the impact of the community study research experience in terms of knowledge gained about the community that was the focus of the study. The second purpose was to assess the impact of the community study research experience in terms of knowledge gained from the research process. And, the third purpose was to investigate the relationships of the overall impact of the community study research experience and the context of the case study research experience. The overall purpose of the study was to assess the impact of the community study research experience on the graduate students enrolled in the course School Organization and Administration and relate the impact with factors in the context of the students' experiences.

Research Design and Methodology

Design

To achieve the purposes of the study, it was decided to assess the impact of the community study research experience on the students who had conducted and completed community studies in the course, School Organization and Administration. This would be achieved by questioning the students regarding the impact of the experience as well as regarding their personal context during the research experience. A decision was made to conceptualize and formulate this study as a descriptive study yet guided by a theoretical framework concerned with the individual context

of the case study research experience and the personal impact of the case study experience.

Methodology

In order to assess descriptively the impact of the community study research experience on individual students as well as assess their personal contexts during the community study research experience through efficient questioning of individual students, it was decided that a survey research methodology would be employed. The survey would be primarily in the form of a close-ended, self-response survey instrument yet would contain a limited number of open-ended questions. In the following section, the theoretical details of the survey instrument are discussed, and the practical aspects of the administration of the survey instrument are presented.

The Survey Instrument

In order to realize the purposes of the study, a survey instrument was developed designed for self-response by each graduate students enrolled in School Organization & Administration during the 1992, 1993, and 1994 summer sessions. Consistent with the purposes of the study, there were three purposes of the survey instrument. The first was to assess the impact on the prospective administrator of the knowledge gained from the focus of the community study. The second purpose was to assess the impact of the knowledge gained from the research process. And, the third purpose was to explore the relationship of the impact of the community study research experience on the prospective administrator with conditions in the context of the research experience.

Theoretical Framework

A two-part theoretical framework was developed to guide instrument development. One part of the theoretical framework is concerned with (I) the student *context* of the community study research experience. And, the other part is concerned with (II) the *impact* of the community study research experience on the student.

The (I) context of the study is considered in terms of 2 X 3 matrix. In the matrix, the primary factors include: (A) *contextual factors* and (B) *experiential time* when the community study was conducted. The (A) contextual factors are further considered in terms of (1) *programmatic* factors, (2) *course* factors, and (3) *individual* factors. And, the (B) experiential time factor is further considered in terms of (1) *past*, (2) *present*, and (3) *future*.

The (II) impact of the study is considered in terms of 3 X 2 matrix. In the matrix, the primary factors are: (A) *knowledge gained* by the student and (B) *experiential components* of the case study. The (A) knowledge gained factor is further considered in terms of (1) *theoretical knowledge* , (2) *substantive knowledge*, and (3) *practical knowledge*. And, the (B) experiential components are further considered in terms of (1) the *theoretical perspective* employed in the community study and (2) the *research processes* employed in conducting the community study.

A representation of the theoretical framework is presented in Figure 1.

The Questionnaire

Employing the theoretical framework as a guide, a self-response survey instrument, titled the *Community Power & Survey Questionnaire*, was developed. The Questionnaire contains forty-six required response

Figure 1

A Representation of the Theoretical Framework which Guided Survey Instrument Development

Context of the Community Study Experience

	Contextual Factors		
Experiential Time When the Study Was Conducted	**Programmatic**	**Course**	**Individual**
Past	(not assessed)	(not assessed)	
Present			
Future	(not assessed)	(not assessed)	

Impact of the Community Study Experience

	Knowledge Gained		
Experiential Components of the Case Study	**Theoretical**	**Substantive**	**Practical**
Community Investigated			
Research Process			

items and four optional response items. Of the forty-six items, twenty-five are concerned with assessing the individual student *context of the case study experience*, and twenty-one are concerned with assessing the *impact of the case study research experience* on the individual student. The four optional response items are open-ended questions which allow respondents to elaborate in detail on aspects of the community study research experience not covered in the required response items. Appendix E contains a copy of the *Community Power & Survey Questionnaire*. And, Appendix F contains an item-by-factor matrix for the Questionnaire.

Questionnaire Administration

Questionnaires Sent Out

Consistent with the design of the study, forty-one Questionnaires were sent to students. Contained in the Questionnaire was a set of directions. Upon completion of the Questionnaire, respondents were directed to return it in an enclosed, self-address, pre-stamped envelope.

Of the 41 students to whom Questionnaires were mailed, 2 (5%) could be classified as *non-educators*, and 39 (95%) could be classified as *educators*. Of the non-educators, one was a university administrator and the other was a full-time graduate student. Of the 39 who could be classified as educators, 2 (5%) were college professors, 5 (13%) were private school personnel, and 32 (82%) were public school personnel. Excluding the college professors and including both the private and public school educators, 4 (11%) held the position of superintendent, 3 (8%) held central office administrative positions, 9 (24%) held the position of principal, 20 (54%) held the position of teacher, and 1 (3%) was a full-time graduate student.

Of the 41 students to whom Questionnaires were mailed, 36 (88%) lived and worked in the U.S., specifically the state of Washington, and 5 (12%) lived and held positions outside of the U.S., specifically in Asian countries. Of the 41 students, 22 (54%) were men, and 19 (46%) were women.

Questionnaires Received

At the writing of this preliminary analysis, 15 (37%) completed questionnaires had been received and were usable. Of these, at least 12 (80%) could be identified as *educators*. Of the twelve, 2 (17%) were superintendents at the time they were enrolled in the School Organization & Administration course, none (0%) held central office positions, 3 (25%) were principals, 6 (50%) were teachers, and 1 (8%) was associated with higher education. Of the 15 respondents, 11 (73%) were men, and 4 (27%) were women. Comparing the characteristics of the students who were mailed questionnaires with those who returned questionnaires, it can be concluded that the sample who returned the questionnaires closely approximates in terms of percentages the 41 students who were mailed questionnaires. Hence, a preliminary analysis of the data based on 15 returns is warranted but must be interpreted with caution.

Analysis of Data

The following is a preliminary, limited, and simplified analysis of the Questionnaires. The analysis is based on the return of 15 (40%) usable Questionnaires out of a possible 41. In the analysis, only descriptive statistics are used to analyze the data. In the responses employing a five point ordinal scale, it is assumed that individual responses as well as means of responses have an uncertainty in measurement of $\pm$ 0.1. Hence,

difference among means must be greater than 0.1 to be considered meaningful.

It is important to note that one of the investigators was the professor who taught the course in which the case study research experience was assigned. Biased responses could have resulted, since this professor could be understood by the students to have had some influence over their professional careers. However, because all responses were returned anonymously, it is anticipated that any bias would be minimal. Hence, considering the response rate and possible area of bias, the conclusions based on the analysis must be viewed as suggestive rather than conclusive.

The Context of the Community Study Research Experience

The purpose of collecting data regarding the context of the community study research experience is to investigate how the impact of the community study research experience is associated with various categories of contextual factors, for example years of professional experience and professional position held. As noted above, at the time of the preparation of this analysis, only 15 of a possible 41 questionnaires had been received. Since most analysis of the contextual factors would necessitate dividing the 15 responses into categories which would have very small frequencies, it was decided that only those analyses which would involve all 15 responses would be considered. There were two such factors. One of these was concerned with the program in educational administration, and the other was concerned with the School Organization & Administration course. Beyond these two factors, it was decided that an analysis of the factors associated with the context of the community study research experience would not be conducted and reported. With this decision made, an analysis of the association of the impact of the

community study research experience with various contextual factors was also precluded.

The Program in Educational Administration

There were three items which assessed the quality of a student's present experience in the educational administration credential and/or degree program. Across all three items, the mean was 4.2 This indicates that the students feel that the program has been useful, the sequence of courses appropriate, and they took the School Organization & Administration course at the right time.

The School Organization & Administration Course

There were two clusters of items which assessed the quality of a student's experience in the School Organization & Administration course. One cluster of four items was concerned with the course itself, and the other cluster of three items was concerned with the Community Study Research Project. The mean for the items related to the course was 4.3; while, the mean of the items related to the community study was 4.2. Hence, it can be concluded that the students feel the course content was appropriate, and they gained useful knowledge in the course. It can also be concluded that the students feel the Community Study Research Project was a useful experience and required an acceptable amount of time.

Impact of the Community Study Research Experience

The impact of the community study research experience on students was analyzed in terms of the knowledge gained about the community investigated and the knowledge gained about research through the research process. The overall impact of the experience was also assessed. The means of the responses by item, across items within cells, and across cells are summarized in a matrix presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Response-Mean Matrix, Regardless of Contextual Factors, for Impact-of-Community-Study-Research-Project-Experience Row and Column Means for Items on the Community Power Structure & Survey Study Questionnaire

Impact of the Community Study Research Project Experience
N = 15
[44] = 4.3
[45] = 4.0
[46] = 4.4
Independent Mean
4.2 (0.9)*

	Level of Knowledge Gained			
Type of Knowledge Gained	**Theoretical**	**Substantive**	**Practical**	**Row Means**
Community Investigated	[26] = 4.2 [27] = 4.4 [28] = 4.3 **4.3**	[29] = 4.5 [30] = 4.5 [31] = 4.3 **4.4**	[32] = 4.0 [33] = 4.2 [34] = 3.4 **3.9**	**4.2 (0.7)**
Research Process	[35] = 4.0 [36] = 4.1 [37] = 4.1 **4.1**	[38] = 4.0 [39] = 3.0 [40] = 3.6 **3.5**	[41] = 3.8 [42] = 3.6 [43] = 3.8 **3.7**	**3.8 (0.5)**
Column Means	**4.2 (0.6)**	**4.0 (0.6)**	**3.8 (0.4)**	**Grand Mean** **4.0 (0.5)**

*All numbers are rounded off consistent with the number of significant figures in the measurements. The numbers in brackets refer to items on the Questionnaire. The non-bold numbers not in brackets in the cells are the means for item responses. The numbers in parentheses are standard deviations. And, the bold numbers not in parentheses are means across item responses.

For purposes of this limited analysis, only row, column, and grand means are considered. Analyses among individual items within cells and analyses across cells will not be conducted.

Overall Impact

The overall impact of the community study research project experience, regardless of contextual factors, was assessed in two ways. First, it was assessed by three independent items which addressed the overall impact. And, secondly, it was assessed through a composite of eighteen items which addressed both levels of knowledge gained and types of knowledge gained in the community study research project. For the overall independent assessment, the mean was 4.2, and for the composite assessment, the mean was 4.0. Taken together, these means suggest two conclusions; one of these is concerned with the overall impact of the community study research experience, and the other is concerned with the survey instrument. Regarding the first conclusion, the 4.2 and the 4.0 means suggest that the students learned a substantial amount through the community study research project. Regarding the second conclusion, the closeness of the two means suggests that the survey instrument has a relatively high level of internal reliability.

Type of Knowledge Gained

The impact of the community study research experience, regardless of contextual factors, was analyzed in terms of the type of knowledge gained, knowledge about the community investigated and knowledge about research processes. Nine items were employed to assess the knowledge gained regarding the community investigated, and nine items were used to assess the knowledge gained concerning research processes. Across all 13 respondents, the mean for knowledge gained about the

community investigated was 4.2, and the mean for knowledge gained about research processes was 3.8. Employing the "0.1" decision rule noted above concerning meaningful differences, it can be concluded that students in the community study research experience, regardless of contextual factors, gained more knowledge of the community investigated than they did regarding knowledge of research processes.

Level of Knowledge Gained

The impact of the community study research experience, regardless of contextual factors, was analyzed in terms of the level of knowledge gained, theoretical knowledge, substantive knowledge, and practical knowledge. Nine items were employed to assess each of these types of knowledge. Across all 13 respondents, the mean for theoretical knowledge gained was 4.2; the mean for substantive knowledge gained was 4.0; and the mean for practical knowledge gained was 3.8. Employing the "0.1" decision rule, it can be concluded that students in the community study research experience, regardless of contextual factors, gained the most knowledge in the theoretical area and the least knowledge in the practical area, with substantive knowledge lying in between these two.

Conclusions of the Study

Although only a limited number of responses were available for analysis at this writing, four important patterns emerge which will likely hold up with further analyses of more responses. The first is that the students were satisfied with their experiences in the educational administration programs as well as with their experiences in the School Organization & Administration course. The second is that the student were satisfied with their experience with the community study research project. The third is that the students gained considerable knowledge from the

community study research project. And, the fourth is that in the community study research project, the students gained more theoretical than practical knowledge and learned more about the community investigated than about the research process.

Observations Regarding Community Study Research Projects

Based on the limited conclusions of the study reported above and the personal experiences of the course professor, several observations are offered regarding providing students in preparation programs for school administrators with community study research experiences.

The community study research experience is a partial solution for the lack of sophistication prospective administrators hold regarding the concept of *community*. Both prospective and practicing school administrators do gain a more sophisticated understanding of the concept of *community* after completing a community study. However, as intensive as the community study research experience is, a three-week period may not be enough time to transform completely unsophisticated conceptions of *community* into more sophisticated ones.

The satisfaction most students experience in designing, conducting, and reporting community study research projects needs to be re-emphasized. It is the type of satisfaction one receives after hard work resulting in a very presentable product valued by others. Genuine student satisfaction from community study research projects, as in any teaching situation, leads to considerable teacher satisfaction.

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Appendix A

1992 Community Power Structure Studies

Brewitt, Robert W., Olzendam, Alison M, Reault, Greg J., & Sutton, James D. (1992). *A Power Structure of the Community in Pullman, Washington: A Study of Kinship.*

Baldwin, Teresa, Flores-Davis, Sonia E., Grogan, Margaret, & Lloyd, Joe A. (1992). *The Community of Pullman, Washington, Power Structure: Decisional Analysis Model.*

Bernazzani, Michael, Lesmeister, Teri, Sessions, Douglas M., & Stuart, Roxanne M. (1992). *Wealth and Status: A Socio-Economic Study of Influential People in Pullman, Washington.*

Anderson, Claudia, Gosse, Jonathan F., & Poirot, Jean-Louis. (1992). *Community Power Structure Study: Reputational Influence within the Greater Pullman Community.*

1993 Community Survey Studies

Clemens, Debra, Johnston Paul S., Klapwyk R. Ray, & O'Connor Frederick H. (1993). *Educational Issues as Defied by Person of Reputational Influence in the Greater Pullman Community.*

Dempsey, Patricia, Griner, Dennis E. Kinnee, John R., & Morgan, Michael. (1993). *The Opinions of the Power Structure of the Community of Pullman, Washington: Decisional Analysis Model.*

Charlton, Ruby J., Morrissette, Leticia Mendoza, Wise, Barbara A. & Zingmark, Carolyn. (1993). *Wealth, status, and Schools: A Study of the Opinions of Influential People Regarding School Issues in Pullman, Washington.*

1994 Community Survey Studies

Amthor, Brigitte, Esche, Timothy L., Rick E. George, & B. Olaf Jorgenson. (1994). *The Pullman School District Draft Facilities Master Plan: Attitudes of the Power Elite.*

Alsbury, Thomas L., Heiman, Julie, Lahmann, William V., & Thornton, Timothy. (1992). *High Socio-Economic Status Community Member Response to Proposed Pullman School District Facilities Master Plan.*

Boyd, Linda L., Clarke, Carol A. Foley Dale, & Tshushima, Teresa M. (1994). *Opinions of Facilities Needs for Pullman School District, Washington: Decisional Analysis Model.*

Appendix B

COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE STUDY PRESENTATIONS

made to the
Pullman School District Administrative Team
and
School Directors

Pullman School District Central Office
Pullman, Washington
July 31, 1992

Presentations by Research Teams, Department of Educational Administration & Supervision, Washington State University

Introductory Comments

Walter H. Gmelch, Chair
Donald B. Reed, Associate Professor

Presentations

A Power Structure of the Community in Pullman, Washington: A Kinship Study	Alison M. Olzendam Greg J. Reault Robert W. Brewitt James D. Sutton
Wealth and Status: A Socio-Economic Study of Influential People in Pullman, Washington	Teri S. Lesmeister Roxanne M. Stuart Michael S. Bernazzani Douglas M. Sessions
The Community of Pullman, Washington: Decisional Analysis Model	Margaret Grogan Sonia Flores-Davis Teresa V. Baldwin Joe A. Lloyd
Reputational Influence within the Greater Pullman Community	Claudia A. Anderson Jonathan F. Gosse Jean-Louis Poirot

Questions and Responses

Donald B. Reed
Research Team Members

Closing Comments

Donald B. Reed
Walter H. Gmelch

Appendix C

A SURVEY OF OPINIONS OF INFLUENTIAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

made to the
Pullman School District Administrative Team
and
School Directors

Pullman School District Central Office
Pullman, Washington
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Friday, July 30, 1993

Presentations by Research Teams, School Organization and Administration (ED AD 580), Department of Educational Administration & Supervision, Washington State University

Introductory Comments

Walter H. Gmelch, Chair
Donald B. Reed, Associate Professor

Presentations

Wealth, Status and Schools: A Study of the Opinions of Influential People Regarding School Issues in Pullman, Washington	Carolyn Zingmark Leticia Mendoza Morrissette Ruby J. Charlton Barbara A. Wise
Educational Issues as Defined by Persons of Reputational Influence in the Greater Pullman Community	Paul S. Johnston Jean H. Lindley Debra Clemens R. Ray Klapwyk Frederick H. O'Connor
The Opinions of the Power Structure of the Community of Pullman, Washington: Decisional Analysis Model	Michael Morgan James G. Martin Patricia Dempsey Dennis E. Griner John R. Kinnee

Questions and Responses

Donald B. Reed
Research Team Members

Closing Comments

Donald B. Reed
Walter H. Gmelch

Appendix D

OPINIONS OF INFLUENTIAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

A Presentation Made to the Pullman School District Administrative Team, Board of Directors, and Facilities Planning Committee

Pullman School District Central Office
Pullman, Washington
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Friday, July 29, 1994

The presentations will be made by research teams composed of members of the School Organization and Administration course (ED AD 580), Department of Leadership & Counseling Psychology, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington.

Introductory Comments

Walter H. Gmelch, Professor and Department Chair
Donald B. Reed, Associate Professor

Presentations

Opinions of Facilities Needs for the Pullman School District: Decisional Analysis Model	Carol A. Clarke Teresa M. Tsushima Linda L. Boyd C. Dale Foley
High Socio-Economic Status Community Members Response to the Proposed Pullman School District Facilities Master Plan	Timothy L. Thornton Julie A. Heiman William V. Lahmann Thomas L. Alsbury
The Pullman School District Draft Facilities Master Plan: Attitudes of the Power Elite	Brigitte Amthor Timothy L. Esche B. Olaf Jorgenson Rick E. George

Questions and Responses

Donald B. Reed
Research Team Members

Closing Comments

Donald B. Reed
Walter H. Gmelch

Appendix E
COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE & SURVEY STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

I have been asked to prepare a paper on the effectiveness of using community power structure and community survey study assignments in educational administration courses. In assessing the effectiveness of these assignments, it is important that I get input from the graduate students who completed these assignments. Please fill out this questionnaire as soon as possible and return it to me immediately in the enclosed envelope. If an item does not apply to you, please write **N/A** by the item number. All responses will be held strictly confidential.

Please mail your completed questionnaire in the self-addressed envelope--postage free if mailed in the United States--to Donald B. Reed, Department of Educational Administration & Supervision--2136, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99163-9975. A return by October 14th would be appreciated. You may FAX your completed questionnaire to me at 509-335-7977. If you should have any questions, please call me at my office, 509-335-5023, or my home, 509-332-8953. Thanks for your help and assistance.

Donald B. Reed
Associate Professor
Washington State University

Statements 1 - 3 refer to your program in the Department of Educational Leadership (formally the Department of Educational Administration & Supervision) at Washington State University **at the time you took the ED AD 580 course**, Summer 1992, Summer 1993, or Summer 1994. **Please respond to the following statements by circling the appropriate number where:**

5 = Strongly agree	4 = Agree	3 = Equally agree and disagree	2 = Disagree	1 = Strongly disagree

1. The program in Educational Administration has been a useful experience. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

2. The sequence of courses in my degree/ credential program has been appropriate. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

3. I took the ED AD 580 course at about the right time in my program. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

Continue on the reverse side.

Statements 4 - 11 refer to the School Organization and Administration course (ED AD 580) **at the time you took the course.**

Please responding to the following statements by circling the appropriate number where:

5 = Strongly agree	**4 =** Agree	**3 =** Equally agree and disagree	**2 =** Disagree	**1 =** Strongly disagree

4. The content of the course was appropriate. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

5. I gained insights from the course. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

6. I learned from the other students in the course. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

7. The assignments in the course were useful. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

8. The amount of work in the course was about right. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

9. The community power structure/community survey study was a useful assignment. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

10. The community power structure/community survey study required an acceptable amount of time. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

11. In comparison to other assignments in the ED AD 580 course, I found the study the most useful. 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

Continue on the next page.

Statements 12 - 18 refer to you **at the time you took the ED AD 580 course.** **Please circle the most appropriate response or fill in the blank as indicated. Where years are requested, round off to the nearest full year.**

12. I was enrolled in the ED AD 580 course during:
    1 - Summer 1992
    2 - Summer 1993
    3 - Summer 1994

13. The theoretical perspective which guided my study was:
    1 - Kinship theory --family analysis
    2 - Elite theory-- reputational analysis
    3 - Pluralistic theory-- decisional analysis
    4 - Social class theory-- SES analysis

14. I conducted a community power structure study or a community survey study:
    1 - Community power structure study
    2 - Community survey study

15. The number of years of professional experience I had had in public education at the time I was taking ED AD 580 was:
    _____ Years

16. The number of years in my then current position was:
    _____ Years

17. The highest academic degree I had held was:
    1 - Bachelors
    2 - Masters
    3 - Doctorate
    4 - Other _____

18. The highest level of professional education certification I had held was:
    1 - Teacher
    2 - Principal
    3 - Program Administrator
    4 - Superintendent
    5 - Other _____
    6 - No certificate

Continued on the reverse side.

Statements 19 - 25 refer to you **at the time you took the EDAD580 course.** **Please circle the most appropriate response or fill in the blank as indicated. Where numbers are requested, approximate.**

19. My gender is:
    1 - Male
    2 - Female

20. The title of my then current position was:
    1 - Teacher
    2 - Vice Principal
    3 - Principal
    4 - Coordinator
    5 - Director
    6 - Assistant Superintendent
    7 - Superintendent
    8 - Other _____

21. The level of my then current position was:
    1 - Elementary
    2 - Middle/Junior High
    3 - High
    4 - District
    5 - ESD
    6 - Other _____

22. At the time I took the course, the student enrollment of my school was about:
    _____ Students

23. At the time I took the course, the student enrollment in my district was about:
    _____ Students

24. I was then working toward completing the requirements for the following Washington education certificate:
    1 - Teacher
    2 - Principal
    3 - Program Administrator
    4 - Superintendent
    5 - Other _____
    6 - No certificate

25. I was then working toward completing the requirements for the following degree at Washington State University:
    1 - Bachelors
    2 - Masters
    3 - Doctorate
    4 - No degree

Continue on the next page.

Statements 26 - 35 refer to the community power structure or community survey study you conducted in the ED AD 580 course. **Please respond to the following statements by circling the appropriate number where:**

5 = Strongly agree	4 = Agree	3 = Equally agree and disagree	2 = Disagree	1 = Strongly disagree

26. I learned how to look at a community from a particular theoretical perspective.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
27. I learned how various theoretical perspectives give different pictures of a community.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
28. I learned that different theoretical perspectives of a community are based on different assumptions.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
29. I learned about the power structure of Pullman.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
30. I learned who the politically powerful individuals in Pullman were.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
31. I learned how the politically powerful in Pullman are associated with one another.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
32. I learned how to efficiently identify the politically powerful individuals in a community.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
33. I learned how to make recommendations for political action based on data collected.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
34 I learned that political action recommendations must be consistent with a particular theoretical perspective.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
35. I learned how to design a research project employing a theoretical perspective.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

Continue on the reverse side.

Statements 36 - 46 refer to the community power structure or community survey study you conducted in the ED AD 580 course. **Please respond to the following statements by circling the appropriate number where:**

5 = Strongly agree	4 = Agree	3 = Equally agree and disagree	2 = Disagree	1 = Strongly disagree

36. I learned how different theoretical perspectives give rise to different research methods.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
37. I learned how to develop research methods which are consistent with a theoretical perspective.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
38. I learned how to design a community study.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
39. I learned interviewing skills.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
40. I learned data analysis skills.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
41. I learned how to work as a member of a community research team.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
42. I learned how to write a research report.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
43. I learned how to orally present a research project.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
44. I am satisfied with the benefits I gained from conducting the Pullman community power structure/community study.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
45. I am satisfied with the written report of my study.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
46. I am satisfied with the oral presentation of my study.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

Continue on the next page.

With very few words, please respond to questions 47 - 50.

47. What recommendation do you have for improving the community power structure/community survey study project?

48. What were the most important benefits of the community power structure/community survey project?

49. In this questionnaire, what was not asked that should have been asked? Please indicate the questions and give your responses.

50. If you have any other comments regarding any aspect of the community power structure/community survey project, please make them here.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Now, please return it to Donald B. Reed, Department of Educational Administration & Supervision (now the Department of Educational Leadership), Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99163-9975. You may FAX your completed questionnaire to 509-335-7977.

Appendix F

PROSPECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS STUDYING COMMUNITIES QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM MATRIX

Context of the Community Study Experience

	Contextual Factors		
Experiential Time When the Study was Conducted	**Programmatic**	**Course**	**Individual**
Past	(not assessed)	(not assessed)	15. The number of years of professional experience I had had in public education at the time I was taking ED AD 580 was: 16. The number of years in my then current position was: 17. The highest academic degree I had held was: 18. The highest level of professional education certification I had held was:
Present	1. The program in Educational Administration has been a useful experience. 2. The sequence of courses in my degree/credential program has been appropriate. 3. I took the ED AD 580 course at about the right time in my program.	4. The content of the course was appropriate. 5. I gained insights from the course. 6. I learned from the other students in the course. 7. The assignments in the course were useful. 8. The amount of work in the course was about right. 9. The community power structure/community survey study was a useful assignment. 10. The community power structure/community survey study required an acceptable amount of time. 11. In comparison to other assignments in the ED AD 580 course, I found the study the most useful.	12. I was enrolled in the ED AD 580 course during: 13. The theoretical perspective which guided my study was: 14. I conducted a community power structure study or a community survey study: 19. My gender is: 20. The title of my then current position was: 21. The level of my then current position was: 22. At the time I took the course, the student enrollment of my school was about: 23. At the time I took the course, the student enrollment in my district was about:
Future	(not assessed)	(not assessed)	24. I was then working toward completing the requirements for the following Washington education certificate: 25. I was then working toward completing the requirements for the following degree at Washington State University:

Appendix F (continued)

PROSPECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS STUDYING COMMUNITIES QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM MATRIX (continued)

Impact of the Community Study Experience

	Knowledge Gained		
	44. I am satisfied with the benefits I gained from conducting the Pullman community power structure/community study. 45. I am satisfied with the written report of my study. 46. I am satisfied with the oral presentation of my study.		
Experiential Components of the Case Study	**Theoretical**	**Substantive**	**Practical**
Community Investigated	26. I learned how to look at a community from a particular theoretical perspective. 27. I learned how various theoretical perspectives give different pictures of a community. 28. I learned that different theoretical perspectives of a community are based on different assumptions.	29. I learned about the power structure of Pullman. 30. I learned who the politically powerful individuals in Pullman were. 31. I learned how the politically powerful in Pullman are associated with one another.	32. I learned how to efficiently identify the politically powerful individuals in a community. 33. I learned how to make recommendations for political action based on data collected. 34 I learned that political action recommendations must be consistent with a particular theoretical perspective.
Research Process	35. I learned how to design a research project employing a theoretical perspective. 36. I learned how different theoretical perspectives give rise to different research methods. 37. I learned how to develop research methods which are consistent with a theoretical perspective.	38. I learned how to design a community study. 39. I learned interviewing skills. 40. I learned data analysis skills.	41. I learned how to work as a member of a community research team. 42. I learned how to write a research report. 43. I learned how to orally present a research project.

Open Ended Questions

47. What recommendations do you have for improving the community power structure/community survey study project?

48. What were the most important benefits of the community power structure/community survey project?

49. In this questionnaire, what was not asked that should have been asked? Please indicate the question and give your responses.

50. If you have any other comments regarding any aspect of the community power structure/community survey project, please make them here.